

BEFORE THE MICHIGAN HOUSE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
S-1197
STATEMENT OF PATTY PEEK, CHAIR, STRAITS OF MACKINAC ALLIANCE
DECEMBER 11, 2018

My name is Patty Peek, and I am the chair of the Straits of Mackinac Alliance. We are a citizen's group made up of people who live on or near the Straits. I live in St. Ignace, and own the nearest home to Line 5 on the north side of the Mackinac Bridge. I am also one of those "little old ladies " in the U.P. that uses propane to heat her home. I've heard the same threats you have: that if Line 5 closes down, we will all freeze because we have no propane. That is absolutely untrue. Enbridge supplies about one railcar or three truckloads a day of propane to the UP. There are many alternatives available to maintain this supply at an increased cost of mere pennies a gallon if Line 5 were shut down at the Straits.

For me, the bigger winter threat is ice formation, not lack of propane. It is realizing that every day, beneath that ice, 23 million gallons of oil product are being pushed through an antiquated, damaged pipeline. It is recognizing that when there is a pipeline failure, it will be impossible to access, let alone clean up, that oil product as it spreads through the layers of currents that run under the Straits.

Such short memories people have! Earlier this year, on April 1st, a ship's anchor severed three power cables releasing 600 gallons of dielectric fluid in our pure water. Not a drop of that spill was recovered. The same anchor gouged Line 5, thinning the 65-year old metal. At that time, there was a blizzard and no ships could enter the ice-covered lake for many days. What if that anchor had gouged just a little deeper and dragged Line 5 off of its anchor supports, splitting the pipeline and spewing oil into our pure water? The DEQ has now approved 200 anchor supports conveniently holding Line 5 from 2-4 feet off the lakebed for the next anchor drag. Can you really live with that totally unavoidable risk for the ten-year or longer build period for this tunnel project?

I implore you to vote no on the tunnel bill. This bill will give Enbridge an open door to keep that damaged pipeline in our water for at least another decade. In fact, the tunnel agreement would give Enbridge free reign in our Straits for 99 years. Despite an outpouring of dissent from all sides, this bill still has not even removed the Mackinac Bridge Authority from possible entanglements. It is a flawed offering that is being rushed through, all for the benefit of a foreign corporation that provides almost no benefits to Michigan.

If you really are worried about providing a safe way to transport oil and propane, then you need to take the time to write legislation that is based on facts, not threats. You must not saddle "Pure Michigan" with ten or more years of a damaged Line 5. The risk of a catastrophic event is too great. Vote no on SB1197!

pattypeek@yahoo.com